

REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: ITC Tank Fire

DATE: April 11, 2019

PURPOSE/ACTION NEEDED: For Information

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BACKGROUND:

On Sunday, March 17, 2019, Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC) discovered a tank of naphtha on fire within a tank farm of 15 tanks. EPA deployed two On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) to integrate into the existing unified command and provide EPA resources and assets to the response. By the next day multiple tanks were on fire, threatening all the tanks within the farm, as well as other tank farms in close proximity. The initial fire was extinguished on Tuesday, March 19; however, a subsequent fire began on Friday, March 22, as well as a failure of the secondary containment which resulted in a massive spill of thousands of barrels product/fire water/foam into Tucker Bayou and the Houston Ship Channel. A Shelter-in-place was issued for the residents and businesses of Deer Park during the initial fire, as well as the subsequent fire, which resulted in the collapse, burning, or damage to all 15 tanks.

CURRENT STATUS:

EPA continues to oversee ITC's response to the tank farm and the Bayou and Ship Channel, coordinating activities with state and local partners, including the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Harris County Pollution Control Services.

- EPA continues air monitoring with the Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology aircraft (ASPECT), the Trace Atmosphere Gas Analyzer (TAGA), a mobile laboratory capable of real-time sampling of outdoor air or emissions, and hand-held monitors to determine downwind concentrations of pollutants resulting from the fire and release.
- EPA continues collecting surface water samples to be analyzed for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), chemical oxygen demand (COD), and oil & grease.
- As of Tuesday, April 9, 2019:
 - 207,340 feet of boom had been deployed to protect sensitive areas and marine docks on the Channel;
 - 125,346 barrels of product/water had been recovered from water operations;
 - 171,528 barrels of product/water had been recovered from the tank farm;
 - Approximately 465,000 gallons of foam concentrate had been used for fire-fighting/suppression and emission suppression;
 - Over 2,500 federal, state, local, and private personnel have been involved in the response and recovery operations; and
 - Total of 339 vessels, including skimming vessels were deployed to conduct product recovery on the water.

ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

During the fires, as well as the response/recovery phase, emissions of benzene from the spilled product continued to cause concern for response workers, neighboring facilities, and communities downwind of the facility. Air monitoring by EPA, TCEQ, Harris County, and ITC were conducted 24-hours a day to provide sufficient data to local officials to assist in making protective action decisions for their communities, as well as ensuring emergency responders were adequately protected.

There were several areas of concern from the spilled product, including County recreational areas, Texas monuments and parks, and environmentally sensitive areas. Booms, product recovery, shoreline assessments, and water sampling were coordinated to ensure the protection of these areas.

REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

- ITC is subject to both the Spill Prevention and Control Countermeasures (SPCC) regulations under the Clean Water Act (CWA), as well as the Risk Management Program (RMP) provisions under the Clean Air Act (CAA).
- The response/recovery to the fire and resultant spill is being conducted under the provisions of the National Contingency Plan (NCP), as well as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

- Harris County will be conducting a health consultation for the communities surrounding the facility, using the data collected during air monitoring/water sampling. This consultation will be coordinated with Texas Health officials and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).



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